



Winnebago County Veterans Affairs Commissioners Board Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2022

10:00 am

Courthouse Board Room

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge

Present: Barney Ruiter, Steve Bosma, Dave Peterson and Mary Lou Kleveland.

2. Review and Approval of Previous Monthly Meeting Minutes

The January monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. Bosma motioned, second by Peterson to approve the January minutes. Minutes were approved. *There was no meeting in February because there was no quorum.

3. Veteran Service Officer Reports:

- a. Monthly VA numbers: Mary Lou reported that there continues to be lots of phone calls and office visits from veterans. Mary Lou shared the statistics for January and February.
- b. Community Outreach –There will be two new ads running on KIOW during the month of March. Mary Lou will be doing the voice overs for them and each ad will run once a day Monday through Friday. Mary Lou reported that they continue to be effective in reaching veterans in the community. Mary Lou attended the Buffalo Center Waffle Feed on April 13th and the Leland VFW Breakfast on April 20th. Both events were well attended and Mary Lou got to talk to many veterans as well as give out information and business cards.
- c. Review Monthly Expenditure Report Approval –. Mary Lou told the commissioners that she had to do a budget amendment because the budget was initially only supporting a part time veterans service officer (VSO). The amendment made provision for a full time VSO as well as the addition of health insurance for the VSO. Mary Lou also amended a few other line items to more accurately reflect the current needs in the VA office. Dave Peterson motioned, second by Bosma to approve the February expenditure report. Expenditure report was approved and was signed by Ruiter.

4. Old Business: There was no old business to discuss.

5. New Business

- a. VA New & Emerging Information - Mary Lou shared that Sheriff Hepperly had stopped by the VA office after hearing Mary Lou reporting about the VA office at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting. He was interested in learning more about the Coffee and Chat outreach event that Mary Lou hopes to start later this year. He is interested in doing something similar to reach out to the citizens of Winnebago County in an informal setting. He suggested that the Veterans Affairs Office and the Sheriff's Office could join forces to do the Coffee and Chat together. Mary Lou told Sheriff Hepperly that she would want to discuss this idea with the commissioners. Mary Lou also noted that she was unsure when she could begin the Coffee and Chat because right now the Winnebago Co VA office is very busy, Mary Lou's focus is on filing compensation and pension for

veterans. After discussion with the commissioners, it was decided that the Coffee and Chat would be done with just the Veterans Affairs office. Everyone agreed that adding in another organization would muddy the waters. The purpose of the Coffee and Chat is to get veterans together in an informal setting to discuss topics relevant to them and to give them an opportunity to meet and connect with other veterans in the area.

- b. Training – Mary Lou shared that she had successfully completed the Basic Benefits training for VSOs the week of March 7th. She will be applying for national accreditation and needed one of the commissioners to verify her employment as the VSO. Barney Ruitter signed the document that was required. Mary Lou let the commissioners know that the VA office would be closed the week of April 11th as she will be in Des Moines all week for both new VSO training as well as the spring school training that is done by the Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veteran Services Officers (IACCVSO). Mary Lou will post this information on Facebook and her door and will change the voice mail message to reflect the closing.
 - c. Next Meeting Date: Dave Peterson shared that due to his work schedule, he will not be able to attend the meetings on Thursdays. He is willing to step down as a commissioner if the rest of us agreed that was best. Bosma, Ruitter and Kleveland all stated that they absolutely did not want him to step down as he has valuable experience and ideas. After discussion, it was decided that the meetings will be moved to the 4th Monday of the month. Bosma motioned and Ruitter second to change the monthly Commissioners meetings to the 4th Thursday of the month. Motion passed.
 - d. The next meeting will be Monday, April 25, 2022 @ 10 am.
5. **Adjournment** – Peterson motioned; Bosma second. Meeting adjourned.

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